

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Reconsideration and allowance of the rejected claims are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC 103

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Shiraishi (USP 6842221 B1) in view of Yamamoto (US Pub. 2004/0150823). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the following basis.

Applicants respectfully submit that Yamamoto does not qualify as prior art because this patent application publication was not filed in the United States before the invention by Applicant. In particular, Yamamoto was filed in the United States on January 23, 2004, which is the same day as the subject application.

Regarding Shiraishi, the Examiner acknowledges that “Shiraishi does not expressly disclose ‘determining position and orientation of the reticle relative to a reference point on a carrier structure that supports the reticle during the introduction of the reticle onto into the conditioned chamber and adjusting the position and orientation of the reticle in accordance with the reference point’”(see page 3 of the September 1, 2005 office action). Independent claims 1 and 8 recite similar features. Thus, by the Examiner’s own admission, Shiraishi is deficient.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the prior art of record, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the claimed combination of elements recited in independent claims 1, 8 and 15. In addition, since claims 2-7, 9-16 and 16-21 depend from corresponding ones of claims 1, 8, and 15, these claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

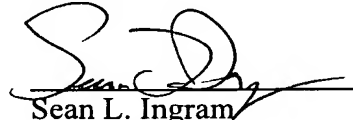
All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner’s reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of pending claims 1-21.

Applicants’ Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number **033975**, Order No. 081468/0307814. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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